Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2010/07/01 : CIA-RDP90-00552R000100830015-5

STAT

WASHINGTON POST
4 JANUARY 1983

Brzezinski Believes KGB Plotted to Kill the Pope

ROME, Jan. 3 (UPI)—Former national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski said he believes the Soviet KGB, the secret security police, was behind the assassination attempt against Pope John Paul II.

Brzezinski, in an interview published Sunday in the Turin newspaper La Stampa, also was quoted as saying that Yuri Andropov, the new Soviet leader, "represents the most sinister forces at work in the Soviet system."

Andropov headed the KGB from 1967 until only months before his appointment to replace the late Leonid Brezhnev in November.

"The secret police he directed for such a long time is responsible for the suppression of internal dissent and profoundly involved in the control of Eastern Europe," Brzezinski was quoted as telling the Italian newspaper. There is mounting evidence, he continued, "that it was implicated in the most monumental assassination attempt carried out in this century—that against the pope."

"There is no doubt that the investigation made by Italian authorities has established the complicity of Bulgaria in the attack against the pope," the former Carter administration official was quoted as saying. "Those who know the reality of Eastern Europe automatically deduce that the Soviet Union was in command of the operation."

"Only the KGB could have been its instrument and Andropov dominated it for 15 years. The logic of this affair . . . is irrefutable," Brzezinski was quoted as saying.

[U.S. intelligence officials have expressed skepticism about the allegations of a KGB connection to the plot against the pope. But former secretary of state Henry Kissinger, in an interview last week with Cable News Network, said ex-CIA director Richard Helms had told him "it had all the earmarks . . . of a KGB operation."

[Kissinger said he agreed: "If you try to square the known facts, it really leads almost to no other conclusion."

["It had to be the Soviets," Kissinger said. "The Bulgarians have no interest in coming after the pope."]

[In Moscow, a Soviet television commentary said the charges of Bulgarian and Soviet involvement were an attempt "to turn Italy into a launching pad for retaliation" and to set Catholics against Communists.]

One Bulgarian—Rome-based airline official Sergei Ivanov Antonov—was arrested in Rome Nov. 25 on suspicion of complicity in the May 13, 1981, attempt on the pope's life. Lawyers for Antonov today formally filed a request for his release on the grounds of lack of evidence.

[According to Reuter, the lawyers' formal application was a detailed alibi, quoting witnesses in an exhaustive account of Antonov's activities on the dates he is alleged to have helped Turkish gunman Mehmet Ali Agca plan and execute the attack.

[Ilario Martella, the Italian magistrate investigating the case, is expected to rule on the lawyers' application when he returns from West Germany, where he is interviewing Musa Cedar Celebi, a right-wing Turk who has been arrested by police in Frankfurt on charges of complicity in the plot.]

Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2010/07/01 : CIA-RDP90-00552R000100830015-5